A SERMON

Preached before

THE

Lord Bishop

OF

CHICHESTER

AT

LEWES,

At his First VISITATION there.

By *TIMOTHY PARKER* Rector of *East-Hothley* in *Sussex*.

IMPRIMATUR,
27. *April* 1676. *Georg. Hooper Reverend. Dom. Archiep. Cant. à Sacris Domesticis.*

LONDON,
Printed for *John Baker* at the Three Pigeons in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1676.

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TO THE

Right Reverend

Father in God

RALPH,

BY

DIVINE PERMISSION,

Lord Bishop

OF

CHICHESTER.

My Lord,

YOur Lordship's favourable acceptance of this following Sermon, and Commanding it to be Printed (for such force Your de-

ſire carries with me) have at length made me adventure to preſent it to Your Lordſhip's View, with hope, that what upon hearing had Your approbation, will upon ſight paſs however for allowable.

After Your Lordſhip's declaring in favour of it, I am little concern'd what Reception 'twill find abroad, believing with ſome reaſon that what ſuch a Judgment diſapproves not, can not eaſily diſpleaſe the Good and Candidly Judicious, and 'tis the good opinion of ſuch only I have value for. If ſome few of my Brethren, by the Peruſal of this plain Diſcourſe, may be in the leaſt meaſure aided towards making themſelves and others Better, I have my end in it.

To contribute the beſt I was able, to excite a greater ſence of Religion amongſt us, by animating the Miniſters of it to diſplay its

Beauty

Beauty in their Lives, as well as their Discourses, was the Design I proposed to my self. And what ever the Success be, I have the satisfaction that I did not take my aim amiss; and how unproportionable soever the means be I used; the defect was not from any want of Good will to lend the best assistance I was able; Prompted thereunto by a Spark of that Zeal for the success and prevalency of true Christian Piety against the Licentiousness of this present Age, that glows in the Hearts of all good men, and that Your Lordship in Particular is all on fire with. This my Lord it is that makes You Venerable, this gains You the Hearts of all good men, makes You awful to the bad. This will make You a Publick Blessing whilst You live, Embalm Your Memory when dead: Nay, make You live after Death on Earth, in the Hearts and

Memories

Memories of all good men that knew You, in Heaven in the Joyes of our Lord. That God would long preſerve Your Lordſhip for the Benefit of his Church, and make all Your Endeavours for its Proſperity eminently ſucceſsful, is the Hearty Prayer of

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble,

And Dutiful Servant,

Timothy Parker.

MATTHEW

MATTHEW 5. 16.

Let your Light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.

THE greateſt and moſt important Enquiry that ever was in the World, was that of the Pſalmiſt, *Who will ſhew us any Good?* Who will diſcover to us wherein true Bleſſedneſs lies, and by what wayes and means we may be able to obtain it? An Enquiry that every man is highly concerned to be ſatisfied in, from that common Principle of Nature that inclines every thing to ſeek its own Preſervation and Wellbeing: But ſuch Darkneſs had man's Apoſtacy brought upon his mind, that he was utterly at

loſs

loſs how to arrive at any ſatisfaction in this Search, as by the great variety of differing Opinions about man's chiefeſt good ſufficiently appears. Sad and deplorable was the condition of the World, plung'd in miſery, and loſt as to all Remedy within Nature's ken and reach, when our bleſſed Saviour, the true light of the World, came from Heaven, on purpoſe to diſcover that happineſs that mankind was groping after in the dark, and to this end communicated his light to thoſe that were his firſt Hearers, not only to guide their own feet in the paths of peace, but that they by the light of their Doctrine, and good example, might illuminate a dark World, diſperſe the beams of ſaving truth from one end of the Heavens to the other, and by propagating it to their Succeſſors, make ſuch a comfortable day to thoſe Nations that had long ſate in darkneſs, and the ſhaddow of death, as ſhould know no night to the worlds end: And to this purpoſe he enjoyns them here in the Text; *Let your Light ſo ſhine, &c.*

Which words, whether they were ſpoken to the promiſcuous multitude of the Diſciples, or appropriated to thoſe that were to be the Stewards and Diſpenſers of the Goſpel Myſtery, is diſputed amongſt Interpreters, nor need it be determined by me. 'Tis ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe, that though the Charge here given belong

belong not ſolely to the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors, yet it caſts a peculiar aſpect upon them, it takes faſter hold of them by an acceſſion of peculiar ties, and binds them to its obedience in a higher and more improved ſence: And that's ſufficient to warrant my addreſſing a Diſcourſe to my Brethren of the Clergy from theſe words: In which as they have a peculiar regard to them, they contain a duty enjoyn'd, with a reaſon enforcing it; and in the duty enjoyned theſe three things. 1. A knowledge of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and that ſuch a knowledge as may enable us to inſtruct others. 2. A vigorous endeavour to propagate our light, and to communicate this wholeſome knowledge to others. 3. A life conformable to this Doctrine. Of theſe in their order, beginning with the firſt.

1. A knowledge of the Goſpel Myſteries, and that ſuch a knowledge as may enable us to inſtruct others in them. The great end why the Goſpel-Miniſtry was ſet up, was *to turn ſinners from darkneſs to light, from the power of Satan to God*, and the chains wherewith the Devil holds men in captivity are chains of darkneſs. *They are alienated from the life of God through the darkneſs that is in them.* All the affairs of this dark Kingdom are carried on by Falſhood and Impoſture. All the Sophiſticate Wares that he obtrudes upon men, for which he gains their

souls in exchange, are put off by the advantage of darkness and obscurity; hence sinners and fools are terms convertible in Scripture, and πᾶς ὁ μοχθηρὸς ἀγνοεῖ, that all sins in some sence are sins of Ignorance is good Divinity. The Devil deals with sinners as *Elisha* with the *Syrians*, first smites them with blindness, and then leads them captive at his pleasure; as the *Philistims* with *Sampson*, first bores their eyes out, and then they are fit for his drudgery. 'Twould spoil the Merchants of Hell to have their Merchandise seen by a true light: And consequently he that would be instrumental to rescue sinners from under the Prince of darkness, must be furnished with an excellent knowledge, with a clear and bright understanding, able to represent things in their true colours; the beauty of holiness and the deformity of sin, both stript of those disguises the Devil puts upon them to make the one lovely, and the other hated. A little knowledge with an honest heart may qualifie an ordinary Christian for Heaven: But 'tis no small scantling of knowledge will qualifie a man to undertake *ex officio*, the charge of conducting others thither? 'Tis sufficient for an ordinary Christian to know his own duty, his own weaknesses, his own temptations; but he that hath the care of others souls, must know what duty belongs to them in their different Stations; What temptations their various conditions are assaulted

with, and what Weapons are proper to repulſe them, what dangers they are expoſed to, and what remedies are to be provided againſt them. The World is a Hoſpital of diſeaſed ſouls, labouring under variety of ſpiritual diſtempers, that call for the compaſſionate skill of the ſpiritual Phyſician; who ſhould know what remedies to apply to their different maladies, and have them alwayes in a readineſs: How to addreſs againſt Pride in the Ambitious, Covetouſneſs in the Mammoniſt, Cruelty in the Oppreſſour, Craft and Overreaching in the Fraudulent, Errour, Prejudice, and Miſperſwaſion in many a well-meaning but deluded ſoul: How to convince the obſtinate, and ſilence the gainſayer, to ſatisfie the ſcrupulous, and confirm the weak; to encourage the timerous, and alarm the drowſie; to make Hypocriſie let fall her Vizard, Vain Glory her Plumes, and preſumption her deluſive hopes; to make the ſtubborn ungovernable ſpirits of men to underſtand the beauty and benefit of Government. His lips ſhould preſerve knowledge, that when he ſpeaks it may be as the Oracles of God, ſuitable to the occaſion, evident to the underſtanding, forcible on the affections; otherwiſe he will never approve himſelf a workman that needs not be aſhamed. He *muſt have milk for babes, and ſtronger meat for grown Chriſtians*; be able to acquaint them with the beau-

ty of God's Works, the Impreſſions of Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs that he hath ſtamp'd on all his Creatures, to which an inſpection into the Works of Nature is requiſite. To make them ſee the Beauty of Providence, the watchful care that God hath exerciſed over his Church in all Ages; to which the knowledge of Church Hiſtory and Antiquities is neceſſary. Above all to make them underſtand in ſome good meaſure τὰ μεγαλεῖα τῦ Θεῦ, the wonders of love and mercy, wiſdom and goodneſs diſplayed in the Work of our Redemption; which cannot be well done without great ſtudy, and ſerious application of mind to find out the meaning of the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, which is the only Authentique Volume in the World where the knowledge of theſe wonders is recorded. To a true underſtanding whereof a great variety of other knowledge in Languages, Antiquities, Cuſtoms of the Eaſtern Nations, lend a very good aſſiſtance.

I might ſpeak my ſelf out of breath, before I could give a ſummary of thoſe things the man of God ought to be inſtructed in, before he be competently furniſhed for the management of his important Charge. The Phyſician of ſouls ſhould be well verſed in Soul Anatomy, know how to govern the Paſſions of men; what's proper to raiſe, allay, and moderate them; for he can never well govern the lives of men, that doth

not in some measure hold the reigns of their affections in his hands. So difficult and important is the Ministerial Charge, that the Father had reason to say 'twas a work *Angelorum humeris formidandum*, and not to be managed by every trifling undertaker. So sensible was the great Apostle of the weightiness of it, though endowed with extraordinary abilities from Heaven, that he cries out, πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἱκανὸς; *Who is sufficient for these things*! How much then doth it concern us, upon whom these ministerial abilities are not conferred but by God's blessing upon our own industry implored by earnest prayer, to study, pray, read, meditate, that we may be enabled to discharge our Functions so, that we may not be ashamed of our workmanship, that God and our consciences may approve of us, that others may receive benefit, and we find favour and acceptance in the day of righteous retributions.

2. A second thing included in this Charge, as it casts a peculiar aspect upon the Ministers of the Gospel, is a vigorous endeavour to communicate our light, and to impart this saving knowledge to others, which is done by instructing their Ignorance, and awakening their consideration. First, by instructing their Ignorance, addressing to their Understandings, illightning the minds of men to make a right judgment of things. The Understanding, which is the leading faculty

of the ſoul muſt firſt be enlightned, before the will which is the principle of action can embrace what's good and avoid what's evil. What ever the grace of God does in renewing the minds of men, it does it by firſt irradiating the Underſtanding; And the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who are ſubworkers to Grace, muſt proceed in the ſame method. Light was the firſt in the Old Creation, when the rude maſs of being began to put on Beauty, and 'tis the firſt in the new Creation, when Chriſt is formed in the ſoul. This therefore muſt be his firſt work, and buſineſs to bring them to a right underſtanding, to reſtore them to their right minds. But he muſt not think it enough to convey truth into their underſtandings and leave it there, but he muſt work it upon their affections by awakening their conſideration, by all the forcible motives of perſwaſion, by all the arts of wiſe and prudent inſinuation, forcing all the paſſions and affections within men to engage on the ſide of truth, to print it the deeper in their minds. Sometimes awakening their fears by repreſenting the terrours of the Lord, ſometimes animating their Hopes, by ſhewing them the recompence of the Righteous. He muſt never give them over till the truth is rooted in their ſouls, and till the fruits of piety appear in their lives. No nor then neither, but ſtill he muſt be watering the tender plants, ſtill cheriſhing all

good

good beginnings, the firſt ſproutings of piety, and encouraging ſmall proficients to greater growth, the good proficients to aſpire after perfection, till Grace ripen into Glory, and all the Runners in this Race, all the Combatants in this Warefare have got the Crowns on their Heads, and the Palms of Victory in their Hands. Never forgetting all the while to beg of God, who alone gives the encreaſe to *Paul*'s planting and *Apollo*'s watering, to crown his endeavours with ſucceſs. And to excite himſelf hereto ſuch conſiderations will be uſeful.

1. That this is the end for which all Miniſterial abilities were beſtowed, *Ephſ.* 4. 11, 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers; For the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Miniſtery, for the edifying of the Body of Chriſt.* All theſe ſeveral Orders of Eccleſiaſtical Perſons, and all variety of gifts that qualifie for the diſcharge of their ſeveral Functions, were for the benefit of the Church of God. And no Talents ſhall be more ſeverely accounted for than thoſe given for this uſe. The very beſtowing them is an exaction of duty, the receiving them like that of Preſs-money, an engagement to ſervice and employment. If we let theſe Treaſures lie by and ruſt, the very ruſt of them will witneſs againſt us.

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2. 'Tis the beſt teſtimony of our love, the greateſt proof of our fidelity to our Lord and Maſter. That great lover of Souls hath intruſted many of them to our care, and in them the worth of many Worlds is depoſited in our hands. Whether they ſhall live Eternal Ages in Joyes, too big for Mortal thoughts to conceive, or die the Devil's Slaves, and partake his torments, depends in great meaſure upon our care in inſtructing them. What value our Saviour puts upon them is beſt underſtood by the price he paid for them, they were redeemed with the blood of God; and by his paſſionate recommending them to the care of thoſe whom he appointed their Guides and Inſtructors. *Simon Son of Jonah loveſt thou me? Feed my Sheep.* And again, and a third time, *loveſt thou me? Feed my Sheep, feed my Lambs.* If we have any affection for that Saviour of ours to whom we owe our preſent valuable enjoyments, and all our future hopes; if any compaſſion for thoſe ſouls which are the purchaſe of his blood, if any regard of that important truſt that muſt be accounted for with greateſt ſeverity, we cannot but bend all the Forces and Powers of our Souls to the diſcharge of it, and apply our ſelves to it with greateſt chearfulneſs and alacrity in teſtimony of the great honour he hath put upon us: For

3. It is the Nobleſt employment in the World.

A work of the greateſt Charity, and Charity is the work of Heaven. The greateſt object of compaſſion in the World are the ſouls of men blinded by Ignorance, enſlaved to luſt, in bondage to the Devil; and the greateſt labour of Love is that that's undergone to reſcue them out of that captivity. To cloath naked backs, and feed empty bowels, and redeem miſerable Captives from the thraldom of mercileſs Tyrants, is a charity that God accepts, and highly rewards. But to cloath the nakedneſs of mens underſtandings by making them wiſe to ſalvation, to feed poor hunger-ſtarved ſouls with the bread of life, to break off the Devil's fetters, and redeem them from helliſh tyranny, is a charity as much more noble, as Eternity exceeds Time, as the Souls of men are of more worth than their Bodies. 'Tis a Work that rejoyces Heaven, cauſes Joy amongſt the Angels. Thoſe Bleſſed Spirits keep (as it were) a Feſtival upon the day of a ſinner's Newbirth. And ſhall a work applauded by all the Inhabitants of Heaven be managed with coldneſs and indifferency, with faint and languiſhing endeavours. There's nothing makes men more Godlike than becoming great and publick Benefactors; and none are more Eminently ſo, than they that are inſtrumental to turn many ſouls to Righteouſneſs. He that hath any ſenſe of true Godlineſs in his heart, cannot but think it one

of the greatest blessings God can bestow upon him, to make him an instrument of deriving blessings upon a Multitude: Much more, blessings of that importance that do men good for ever, blessings that fit and prepare men for Heaven, that shall be everlastingly remembred there with eternal Hallelujahs to God the Author, and eternal acknowledgments to men the instruments. For it is not to be supposed Ingratitude, a Vice so detestable on Earth, should ever find any place in Heaven.

2. This will be a very great evidence of our own sincerity. 'Tis the nature, the true *Indoles* of true Piety, wherever it is, to spread and dilate it self. All good is communicative, and the better any thing is, the more diffusive. Piety enlarges the hearts of men to espouse the Interest of all mankind; 'tis a dayly prompter to good and worthy actions, whereby others may be advantaged; an active, restless Principle that can no more cease from benefitting all that come within its reach, than fire can cease from burning, or a spring from streaming forth. The love of God and man are the Elements of its Nature. Above all, it makes men painful and industrious in their Callings, faithful in their own places and stations. Since then God hath made it our business and employment in the World to communicate the knowledge of him self and his Christ to men,

to direct them in the Paths that lead to eternal happiness; We cannot have a better evidence that we are partakers of the Divine Nature, than by imitating the Divine Goodness in employing those Talents he hath bestowed upon us, to the use for which he designed them. Our own Sonship will be best made out by our resemblance to our Heavenly Father, and Almighty goodness is that Character that most readily offers it self to the minds of men, when they would frame an *Idea* of God within themselves.

5. The faithful performance of this duty is recompensed with an ample & Superlative reward. Every Soul that we are instrumental to bring to Heaven will add a new lustre to our Crown, *Dan.* 12. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever,* or if that place be capable of another meaning that of our Saviour will put it out of doubt. *He that receives a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet's reward.* Where if a Prophet's reward did not import something extraordinary and transcendent, there would be nothing of encouragement and enforcement to the duty. And if we had not this assurance of a Divine Promise, it might be strongly argued from that natural influence the happiness we are instrumental to procure for others will have upon our own.

To be instrumental to bring Souls to Heaven, to add new Members to the Church Triumphant, is to provide so many everlasting Monuments of our pious care and pains, whose Joys will all unite and center upon us, we looking upon them but as our selves divided, *Children begotten by us to God, with whom we travel'd in pain, till Christ was formed in them.* Besides, God who in justice punishes the Accessory, as well as the Principal in evil deeds, will be more inclinable to reward in us that good, that others do by our counsel, perswasion and direction, by how much he is more prone to shew mercy, in which he delights, than to afflict the children of men, which he does unwillingly. And what an encouragement is this to labour in the Lord's Harvest, to spend our selves for the good of our Flocks, when every soul that we are instrumental to save from death, will bring such an accumulation to our Joyes, and add a new Coronet to our Crown.

3. A third thing in this Charge, is a Life conformable to the Doctrine of the Gospel. Not to mention the obligations common to us with the rest of Christians, there are several considerations peculiar to us as Ministers of the Gospel, that enforce the strictest conformity to the Laws thereof.

1. Whereas other men, by the urgency and exigence of their secular employments, have their thoughts often called off from attending the

Concerns of Eternity; Our very office and employment in this World confines our thoughts to the things of another. It is the happy Priviledge of men of our Order that their general calling as Chriſtians, and more ſpecial as Miniſters, do in a manner *coincidere*, fall into one, at leaſt they hold an intimate correſpondence, and lend a friendly aſſiſtance to each other. Thoſe larger portions of time that others are generally obliged to beſtow upon employments ſecular, we are engaged to ſpend in ſuch, as promote our own and others ſalvation. And if the want of conſideration occaſion moſt mens neglect of the Goſpel (as 'tis certain it does.) It is but juſt and reaſonable to expect that they whoſe office obliges them to give themſelves wholly to the meditation and practice of divine things, who are *Juris Evangelici conſulti*, ſhould live moſt exactly anſwerable to the Goſpel Law. *Abeunt ſtudia in Mores*, ſaid the Orator, mens ſtudies have an influence upon their morals. Both God and men then will expect that they whoſe ſole employment it is to regulate their own and others Lives according to the admirable Rules of Chriſtian Religion ſhould walk ſuitably to their profeſſion. Eſpecially being provided for in temporals almoſt without their care, that they may with leſs diſtraction attend the affairs of a higher nature. They ſhould endeavour to eſcape not only *Vitia*, but *infirma Naturæ*, the com-

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mon frailties incident to humanity, and approach as near as possible to perfection of Angels, whom they so nearly resemble in employment, *they being ministring spirits sent forth for the good of those who shall be heirs of Salvation.* What greater indecency can there be, than for men that converse frequently with holy things, and toss them often in their thoughts to have no sense and relish of them upon their hearts? To meditate upon the love of God and Christ, to be able to tell affectionate and melting stories of it to others, and that possibly with a seeming transport of affection, and yet to freez by this fire; to have the passage betwixt the head & heart so obstructed, that not a spark of truth that enlightens the understanding can get into the heart, and warm it with such a love as is the spring of obedience, is such a Devil's Miracle as vies with that of Almighty God, who preserved the three Children from all smell of fire in the midst of a fiery Furnace. That men, who can discover to others the Reasonableness, the Necessity, the Beauty of Religion, should neither be prevailed upon by the Reason, nor constrained by the Necessity, nor charmed with the Beauty of it, is the most unaccountable thing in the World. What will they be able to answer to God, to their own Consciences, when their own Reasonings, Discourses, Sermons will rise up in Judgment against them? What will they do in

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the day of Visitation, when the great Bishop of their Souls will call them to account for their scandalous and unchristian Lives, so dissonant to the Principles of that holy Doctrine they pretend to be the Teachers of?

2. The great influence of our Examples *in utramque partem* may be another consideration. A little to change my Author's words, *Eo sumus loco constituti, ut bona malaque nostra ad Rempublicam pertineant.* We can neither go to Heaven, nor Hell solitary. I mean, we cannot go to either of those so distant places, but in all probability others will attend as drawn by the Influence of our Examples.

First, Our Holy and Exemplary Lives will render our Labours more succesful, add Authority and Veneration to our Persons, weight to our words, make them λόγους δραστηρίους, καὶ κινητικοὺς, (as he said of *Epectetus*) effectual prevailing words. 'Twill put an edge upon our reproofs, facilitate their entrance, promote their efficacy, be a means to drive them home. The words of God in our mouths are more likely to become λόγια ζῶντα *living Oracles*, the Seed of a New Birth. Not but that the Seed may prosper what ever the hand be that sows it. 'Tis God's blessing gives the encrease, and that depends not on the qualification of the Instrument: But yet 'tis most usually found attending upon the endeavours of good men.

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Our Saviour himſelf (I think I may ſay) would not have been thought to have ſpoke as never man ſpake, if he had not lived as never man lived. With what irreſiſtible Authority did he check the ſins of others, when he uſhered in his reproofs of them with his appeal to themſelves touching his own innocency? *Which of you convinces me of ſin?* Chriſtian Religion is admirable in the Divinity of its Author, in the Purity of its Precepts, in the excellency of its end, in the mightineſs of its aids; but its Beauty is never ſeen to advantage till it become viſible in mens lives. Then it moſt charms the affections of men, recommends it ſelf to their eſteem and approbation, when it ſubdues Luſt and governs Paſſions, and adorns the Converſation. When it makes men meek and merciful, pure and peaceable, humble and reſigned, watchful to lay hold of, and improve all opportunities to do good. When to a great meaſure of knowledge theſe qualifications unite in the ſame Perſon, his Doctrine diſtils as the rain, winds it ſelf into the hearts of men, inſinuates into their affections, takes faſt hold of their ſouls. Beſides the bleſſing that attends upon a good man that renders his endeavours ſucceſsful, there is a natural aptneſs in his words to work an Impreſſion on his Hearers. His own ſoul having the ſtamp of truth upon it, being caſt into the mold of it, and touch'd with a

ſenſe of its importance, and a tender love and compaſſion to the Souls of men, will oblige himſelf to preſs it home with that unaffected gravity and ſeriouſneſs, that his very heart will diſcover it ſelf in his Language, he will give you a taſte of his ſoul in his Diſcourſe. His words come from the heart, and are moſt likely to reach the hearts of others, they proceed from a living Principle, and are moſt likely to beget life in his Hearers. Even *Seneca* would adviſe his Friend *Lucilius* to make uſe of ſuch Inſtructors. *Qui vitâ docent, qui cum dixerint quid faciendum ſit, faciendo, probant; qui docent quid vitandum ſit, nec unquam in eo quod fugiendum dixerint deprehenduntur; quos magis admireris, cum videris, quam cum audieris.* A good Life with him was beyond all Topicks of Perſwaſions.

Secondly, Our ill Examples have a malignant influence, and ſcatter infection far and wide, will give Authority to Vice, and furniſh it with excuſe and apology. If the Salt of the earth loſe its ſavour, rottenneſs and putrefaction will cover the face of it. Two things make wickedneſs bold and daring, and overflow beyond all meaſure, when 'tis either eſtabliſhed by a Law, or encouraged by leading examples. 'Tis obſervable all along that the greateſt ſymptoms of decaying piety were legible in the vitious lives of a depraved Clergy. And the beſt Prognoſticks of

the future growth of Religion is, when it not only tipps the Tongues, but lives in the Hearts, adorns the Converſations, and regulates all the Actions of its Miniſters. So that *Cato*'s definition of an Orator, *Vir bonus dicendi peritus*, is a more neceſſary ingredient into a Preacher's. For with what decency & congruity can he be ſevere in reproving the faults of others, who is indulgent and favourable to his own? *Quid enim turpius quam ab aliis vitæ rationem repoſcere, quam tuæ non potes reddere?* All ſeverity of this nature muſt begin at home. In all probability he will wink at thoſe vices in others which he allows in himſelf, ſpare to ſtrike at the root of thoſe ſins where every blow he gives lights upon himſelf. For with what face can he control the vices of others, whoſe reproofs rebound upon himſelf and flie in his own Face? With what likelihood of ſucceſs can he attempt to ſhame men out of their ſins, who by his own example brings ſin into credit? Will thoſe Remedies he tenders to others be accepted and eſteemed by them, when 'tis apparent he either never uſed them, or if he did found them ineffectual? Phyſician, cure thy ſelf, will be retorted to his ſhame. For a *Demas* to declaim againſt Covetouſneſs a *Diotrephes* againſt Pride and Contention, a *Judas* againſt Treachery, a *Hophni* and *Phineas* againſt luſt and intemperance, a conceited Phariſee againſt Hypocriſie,

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is but to do publick Penance every time he gets into the Pulpit, to light up a torch to expoſe his own ſhame by, to proclaim himſelf a wilful, hardned, ſelf-condemned ſinner, to render himſelf a miſerable and ſad ſpectacle to good men, but the ſcorn and mirth of fools. To what end ſerves the Miniſtry but to perſwade people to conform their Hearts and Lives to the laws and example of the holy Jeſus? And what more effectual courſe can we take to render all our endeavours inſuccesful, than to ſhame our own profeſſion by an unſutable Converſation, to violate thoſe Laws we ſhould enforce obedience to, to confute our holy Doctrine by a lewd practice? Little credit is given to him who frequently contradicts himſelf, and no contradiction ſo injurious to a holy Doctrine as an unholy life. *Quid verbis opus eſt cum facta videam*, is but too uſual a Plea though very unwarrantable whereby men ſhift off the obligations preſt upon them by thoſe who break looſe from all the ties of duty themſelves. Sin reflects contempt upon every thing it meddles with, makes not only the perſons of men deſpiſed, but their uſeful Counſels, their wholeſom Reproofs, their beſt and moſt convincing Arguments loſe their value and eſteem, as coming from them. Which the *Spartan* Senators well underſtood, when a worthleſs perſon having mentioned ſomething uſeful to the Pub-

lick, they voted it ſhould be anew propounded by ſome Perſon of Worth and Integrity, and then put in execution.

3. Conformity of life to the Laws of our Religion is the ready way to obtain that skill in the Myſteries of Chriſtianity that will render us able Miniſters of the New Teſtament. Chriſtianity is a Doctrine according to Godlineſs, and the honeſt heart is the beſt qualification in the learner. A myſtery of Godlineſs, and Piety is the beſt Key to the Myſtery. Such a wiſdom as begins in the fear of the Lord, encreaſes by doing good, and departing from Iniquity, ends in the Beatifical Viſion. Our underſtandings are enlightned in this Myſtery by the ſame degrees that our hearts are purified, till at length when all ſin is purged out, we ſhall be admitted to the ſight of God, who is the Author & the end of our Religion, whither it leads us by ſanctification of the ſpirit, and belief of the truth. Chriſtianity is not *Oſtentatio ſcientiæ*, but *lex vitæ*, and whoſoever does not conform his life to its rules, will be very ſhort ſighted in its Myſteries. Errour in Judgment is the natural iſſue of a polluted heart, *'tis a people that do err in their hearts*. If the Judgment continue Orthodox with an unchriſtian practice, 'tis ſo by mere contingency. He hath no ſecurity to be preſerved from dangerous errour, who does not guard himſelf from wilful ſins; it being too uſual to make ſhipwrack of faith

faith and a good conſcience both together. Whereas he, who uſes the beſt means of information, and does his duty to the beſt of his knowledge and ability, hath the greateſt ſecurity imaginable he ſhall not err dangerouſly. *The ſecrets of the Lord are with them that fear him; A good underſtanding have they that do thereafter.* The lamp of knowledge is fed with the oyl of Piety, as this increaſes or decreaſes, that waxes brighter or dimmer; if this be not preſerved that will be in danger to be extinguiſhed, at beſt it will caſt but a faint and languiſhing light, like the ſepulchral lamps of the Ancients that were impriſoned in a dark Vault, and lent only a wan, pale light to a dead Carcaſs. 'Tis only by doing good and eſchewing evil that we come to have our ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern betwixt the one and the other. There is a ſpiritual ſenſation in the ſoul of man that ſees a Beauty, and reliſhes a ſweetneſs in all the acts enjoyn'd by Religion, that lies aſleep, unleſs by an active and vigourous proſecution of our duty it be exerciſed and ſtirred up.

4. I add fourthly the conſideration of the Perſon whom we repreſent, the Perſon of the Son of God, the Great High Prieſt of our profeſſion, who was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners. A Perſon that never trode one ſtep awry. A Divine pattern of holineſs and purity, humility and charity. His whole life was a paraphraſe

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of this Sermon upon the Mount: All his Actions, Motions, whole Behaviour were exemplary and inſtructing. We bleſs the people in his Name, offer up their prayers to God in his Name, beſeech people in his ſtead to be reconciled to God. How neceſſary is it thoſe hands ſhould be cleanſed from all pollution, that are lift up to a holy God, in the Name of the Holy Jeſus, in the behalf of a people that he purified to himſelf to be a peculiar people zealous of good works? How incongruous and misbecoming is it, that the Ambaſſadours of the Son of God, who came into the World to deſtroy the works of the Devil, ſhould be addicted to any of thoſe which their Lord and Maſter came to deſtroy, that they who are Agents for the Prince of peace, ſhould be of quarrelſome and contentious ſpirits; that they, whom he hath ſet apart to draw others to a conformity to his Laws and great example, ſhould violate and trample upon his Laws, and repreſent his example ſo ill as if he were a Patron and Advocate of Impiety?

I might add laſtly (as deſerving our conſideration) that we cannot be wicked without being more inexcuſable than other ſinners, whether we know more or leſs than they. If we know more, and do as ill our ſtripes will be multiplied proportionably to the greatneſs of our Knowledge. If we know as little, and live as wickedly, the greater

greater obligations and opportunities of knowing better, will be put upon our accounts. The Devils who fell from Heaven, fell deepeſt into Hell; and they who fall from Heaven Gates, from the greateſt advantages of knowing and living well, will be next to them in Torments.

I am ſenſible what miſconſtruction may be put upon my honeſt meaning, and that this preſſing the Miniſtry to the regard of purity, may by ſome be interpreted Reproach and Libelling. But to this I ſhall only ſay, that they who have the thouſand witneſſes to atteſt the truth of their ſincerity, may with joy and exultation of ſpirit, turn admonition to Panegyrick. And I hope there is a great number of ſuch here, who the leſs they have to reform, the more they have for which to rejoyce and to bleſs God. And for thoſe whoſe hearts ſmite them, may they continue ſo to do till repentance and amendment follow. We muſt pleaſe all men for their edification, and for their edification we muſt diſpleaſe them too. 'Twas a good wiſh that of *Bernard's*, *Sic mihi contingat ſemper beare amicos, terrendo ſalubriter, non adulando fallaciter.* Let us not think that our faults can eſcape Notice, the publickneſs of our ſtation, the nature of our employment will not ſuffer it. We are a Spectacle to Angels and men; the eyes of Friends and Enemies are upon us; theſe watch for our halting, thoſe eye us as their patterns.

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Let us not become a ſcorn to the one, nor a grief to the other, nor lay a ſtumbling block in the way of either. Let us be content to hear our Duties preſt upon us by our Friends, who do it in love and compaſſion to our ſouls; or rather let not that content us, but let us proceed to extirpate and abandon all our Vices. This is the moſt effectual courſe we can take to make all men good, and to make the hearts of all good men bleſs God for us, to gain our enemies, and force them to become our friends. God will not fail ta make that Promiſe good to us, wherein to Chriſtians in general he hath obliged himſelf: *If a man's wayes pleaſe the Lord he will make his Enemies to be at Peace with him.*

I proceed now to the latter part of my Text, the Reaſon enforcing the Charge here given; *That they may ſee your Good Works, and Glorifie your Father which is in Heaven. That they may ſee your Good Works.* We muſt take heed we ſtop not there, for if our Aims be ſhort of Heaven, our Reward will be on this ſide Heaven too. The moſt ſpecious and glorious works if done only to be ſeen of men, will find a Hell for their Reward inſtead of an Heaven. But though a Good Name may not be our laſt end, yet as 'tis ſubſervient to the Glory of God, as it renders us more uſeful to the World, and puts us into a greater Capacity of doing good, it is to be accounted

counted one of God's Choiceſt Bleſſings, to be received with thanks, preſerved with care, and procured by all warrantable means. Of all men a Miniſter ought to be moſt tender of it, ſince the Credit of his Perſon credits the Cauſe he manages, and 'tis natural for Contempt to paſs from the former to the latter. If men entertain a low and mean opinion of the Speaker, they'l diſeſteem the things he ſpeaks, ſlight his Doctrine, reject his Counſels, ſcorn his Reproofs, never counſult him in Doubtful Caſes, and (to the Hazard of their Souls) neglect that neceſſary aſſiſtance that otherwiſe they might receive from him: And therefore Saint *Paul* thought it no misbecoming thing to wipe off thoſe Aſperſions caſt on him by the Factious Teachers in the Church of *Corinth.* Indeed, 'tis ſometimes ſo far from being a fault that it becomes a piece of Neceſſary Juſtice that we owe to our ſelves, to vindicate our Names from Slander and Reproach. 'Tis one way of reſiſting the Devil, whoſe very name carries Slander in it, and one of whoſe greateſt Stratagems, to obſtruct the progreſs of Religion, is to blaſt the Reputation of its Miniſters, and bring both their Perſons and Office into diſgrace. And I could wiſh they would take notice of this, who any wayes contribute to bring a diſrepute upon the Clergy, that they only promote the intereſt of Hell, lend their aſſiſtance to the Devil,

and help to uphold by this means his otherwiſe tottering Kingdom.

But after all, a Good Name is beſt ſecured by the ſame Method our Eternal Salvation is. That patient continuance in well-doing whereby we ſeek for Glory, Honour, Immortality hereafter, will ſecure us ſuch a meaſure of eſteem here, as God ſees needful for us. Let us be but careful to diſcharge our Duty, and for our other concerns depoſit them in the ſame hands in which we truſt our Souls. And if when we do well we are evil ſpoken of, we may wear the Reproches of men as our Crown.

Let us not therefore ſeparate what our Saviour hath here united, but ſeek our Credit and Reputation ſo far only, as it is ſubſervient to the further Ends of God's Glory, and our Brethrens Edification, *That men may ſee our Good Works and glorifie, &c.* What it is for men to glorifie God our Saviour himſelf can beſt interpret, and he tells us, *John* 15. *v.* 8. that it is *to bear much fruit*; To have their Souls ſhining with Divine Graces, and their lives beautified with the Works of Holineſs, that is, to be renewed after the Image of God, which Renovation is wrought upon them by a hearty belief of the Goſpel, and ſincere endeavours to conform to the precepts of it. This then is the Purport of our Saviour's Words in the latter part of the Text; By being thus

thus burning and ſhining Lights, we may be happy Inſtruments to make others hearty and ſerious Chriſtians. For by this means they will be brought firſt, to love and liking of the Goſpel. They will conceive there is in it ſomething more than Humane, when it makes men ſo holy, humble and charitable, ſo uſeful to the World, ſo wholly taken up in promoting the greateſt intereſt of mankind. 'Twill breed in them an high eſteem of the Goſpel. For as nothing is more injurious to it than an unſutable converſation in thoſe who are the Promulgers of it, ſo nothing more courts the eſteem of men to it, and recommends it to their approbation, than a ſtrict conformity to its Rules. And when men once come to conceive High and Honourable thoughts of it, the next ſtep will be to ſubmit themſelves to the Laws of it, to put themſelves under its Diſcipline, and try what efficacy it may have upon their own Souls, which they ſee hath wrought ſuch admirable effects in the Souls of others. We may by this happy Union of Purity both in Life and Doctrine, be Inſtruments of begetting ſuch a quick and lively ſenſe of Religion in the hearts of men, ſuch a ſerious and ſober practice of it in their lives, ſuch a Zeal in them to tranſmit it down to their Poſterity, that the places we live in may be the better for us to the World's end, and all after-Ages may reap the fruits of our endeavours.

The whole Christian World hold their Religion at this day from those that were the first Planters of it; every Age since hath been irradiated with their light, and swayed by their Great Examples. The Children of Light in all after Ages acknowledge them for their spiritual Fathers, and the Generations yet to come will rise up and call them blessed. They had extraordinary Abilities (you'l say) and brought Credentials from Heaven, the Gift of Miracles, to attest the Truth of their Doctrine. 'Tis true, they had so, and so 'twas necessary they should, being to propagate a new Doctrine, a Doctrine so contrary to all the Religions then received in the World, they being so few, and having such a wide Province as the World assigned them, and that so entirely captivated by Satan. But God, who proportions the measure of his Gifts to the necessities of the Age in which they are to be employed, is not wanting to bestow upon us, even in this Age, what's needful for the maintenance of true Religion, and successful opposition to the Kingdom of Darkness. Inspired Gifts and Miracles were then necessary to convert a Heathen World. Abilities acquired by God's blessing on our own Industry, employed with honest hearts, seconded by good example, influenced by the Spirit of God, are as sufficient for this Age, as Miracles were, for that. *Manna* was necessary in the Wilderness where all ordinary

ordinary and natural ſupplies were wanting; but when *Iſrael* arrived in *Canaan*, where the neceſſities of life were ſupplied in a natural way from the Plenty and Fertility of the Soil; their miraculous food ceaſed, nor do we find that ſtubborn, mutinous People ever repining at the loſs of it, their neceſſities being amply provided for without it. I perſwade my ſelf, were Miracles neceſſary for the Age we live in, we ſhould not want them. The Spirit of God, ſent on purpoſe to enable for the Work of the Miniſtry, doth ſtill afford all neceſſary Aids. Inſpired Gifts indeed are ceaſed, and Miracles, but the gracious effects of it upon the Hearts of men, attending our Miniſtry are ſtill continued. Where ever I ſee a Soul that's humble, and pure, and charitable, rejoycing in God, deſpiſing the World, patient in Sufferings, and forgiving injuries and enemies, there I am ſure the Spirit of God hath Breathed, Nay there he dwells. And (thanks be to God) the World is not ſo degenerate, but that many of this temper may be found that owe this Renovation of their minds to the influence of the Divine Grace upon them in the uſe of the preſent Miniſtry. So that what was adapted to the Circumſtances of the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, that is ceaſed; but what things accompany Salvation, what tend to renewing the Image of God in the minds of men, *fitting them to be partakers*

of

of the Inheritance of the Saints in light, these are still continued, and shall be to the World's end.

Let us therefore (my Brethren) acquit our selves like faithful Stewards in the Discharge of our mighty Trust. Those Souls that were redeemed with the blood of God, are committed to our care. Let not what was so dear to him, be vile and cheap with us. Let us think no pains too great, no labour and circumspection too much to be used in such a weighty affair. *Cursed*, saith the Prophet, *is he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently*. And the more important the Work is, the heavier will be the Curse, upon either total neglect, or lazy performance. We have two Powerful Engines to reform a depraved World, the Purity of our Doctrine, and the Piety of our Lives, and they never work kindly and effectually, but in Conjunction. Never Conjunction of happy Stars ever portended such Blessings to the World, as these *Gemella Sydera*, these Twin-Lights, when they twist their beams, and shed their united Influence upon it.

These would make us such a Light of the World as would chase all works of darkness out of it, the Rulers of the darkness of this World would not be able to stand before us, if we put on this Armour of Light. A knowing and well instructed Piety is both Armour and Ornament; Armour both of defence and offence, the weapons

pons of our warfare that will render us ſucceſful in fighting the Lord's Battels, ſignally inſtrumental in reducing a ſtubborn rebellious World to obedience to the Laws of our Bleſſed Saviour, the Captain of our Salvation. Let but this Command in the Text be obeyed, and we are ſecure of his Aids whoſe Banners we fight under. *For if our Light ſo ſhine before men, they will ſee our Good Works and Glorifie our Father which is in Heaven.* We ſhall hereby ſecure our own Salvation, credit the Goſpel, rejoyce the Angels in converting Sinners, make all good men with thankful hearts and tongues bleſs God for us, and our ſelves, after we have for a while been burning and ſhining Lights in the World, ſhine as Stars for ever and ever in the Upper Regions of Light and Bliſs.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 7. line 27. read *enlightning* for *illightning*, page 17. line 19. read *Epictetus* for *Epectetus*.